

COMMENDING GOVERNMENTS OF HUNGARY AND ROMANIA

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 303, submitted earlier today by Senators BROWN and SIMON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 303) commending the Governments of Hungary and Romania on the occasion of the signing of a Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today with my distinguished colleague Senator SIMON to urge adoption of a resolution commemorating a historic treaty.

On September 16, 1996, the governments of Romania and Hungary signed a Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness. Both countries deserve high praise for putting aside long time differences to agree to work together toward their common goal of democracy. This treaty shows the commitment of Romania and Hungary to improve their economic cooperation and to expand military relationships not only between each other, but also to the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

This agreement will allow both countries to enjoy a broader participation and sets the framework for the type of cooperation that will be required as these countries eventually enter the NATO.

I recently visited Romania and was able to see first hand the remarkable economic changes that are taking place. American investment in Romania doubled from 1993 to 1994 and doubled again in 1995. This agreement, and the increasing regional security that it exemplifies, will ensure increasing opportunities for U.S. investment.

It is clear that Romania and Hungary were able to set aside their long time differences by signing this treaty in order to improve their regional cooperation in hopes that they will eventually be included in NATO. By the mere suggestion that we expand NATO to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, we see moves to improve the relationships with their neighbors. If we were to actually expand NATO to include these newly emerging democracies, we would ensure that they will never return to communism. We will ensure that the tragic mistakes of the past will never be repeated and the wonderful people of Central and Eastern Europe will enjoy the long deserved freedoms of democracy.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution

be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 303) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

S. RES. 303

Whereas on September 16, 1996, a "Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness between Romania and the Republic of Hungary" was signed by Gyula Horn, Prime Minister of Hungary, and by Nicolae Vacaroiu, Prime Minister of Romania, in Timisoara/Temesvar, Romania;

Whereas this agreement between the two governments is an important step in contributing to the stability of that region and to reconciliation and cooperation among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

Whereas this agreement will enhance the participation of both countries in the Partnership for Peace program and will contribute to and facilitate their closer cooperation with the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the eventual entry of these countries into full NATO participation; and

Whereas this agreement is a further significant step in the process of reconciliation between Hungary and Romania and reflects the desire and effort of both countries to improve their economic cooperation, to foster the free movement of peoples between their countries, to expand military relationships, and to increase cultural and educational cooperation.

It is resolved by the Senate, That the Senate—

(1) commends the farsighted leadership shown by both the government of Hungary and the government of Romania in reaching agreement on the Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness signed on September 16, 1996;

(2) commends the frank, open, and reasoned political dialogue between officials of Hungary and Romania which led to the treaty;

(3) commends the two countries for their efforts to foster improved relations in all fields; and

(4) calls upon the President to utilize all available and appropriate means on behalf of the United States to support the implementation of the provisions of the "Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness between Romania and the Republic of Hungary" and to promote their efforts for regional cooperation as the best means of bring these two countries into NATO and to ensure lasting security in the region.

VOICE OF AMERICA AND RADIO MARTI

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 632, H.R. 3916.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3916) to make available certain Voice of America and Radio Marti multilingual computer readable text and voice recordings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statement relating to the bill be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 3916) was deemed read the third time and passed.

VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1996

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 625, S. 1711.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S.1711) to establish a commission to evaluate the programs of the Federal Government and assist members of the Armed Forces and veterans in readjusting to civilian life, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—COMMISSION ON TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

Sec. 101. Establishment of commission.

Sec. 102. Duties of commission.

Sec. 103. Powers of commission.

Sec. 104. Miscellaneous administrative provisions.

Sec. 105. Commission personnel matters.

Sec. 106. Termination of commission.

Sec. 107. Definitions.

Sec. 108. Funding.

TITLE II—LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 201. Short title.

Sec. 202. Removal of gender references with respect to Servicemen's Group Life Insurance.

Sec. 203. Conversion of retired reservist Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to Veterans' Group Life Insurance and extension of Veterans' Group Life Insurance to members of the Ready Reserves.

Sec. 204. Conversion of SGLI and VGLI to commercial life insurance.

Sec. 205. Technical amendment.

TITLE III—BENEFITS PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Expansion of period of Vietnam era for certain veterans.

Sec. 302. Revision of authority relating to centers for minority veterans and women veterans.

Sec. 303. Outer burial receptacles.

Sec. 304. Clarification of eligibility of minors for burial in national cemeteries.